

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 033985

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFORPN

SUBJECT:U.S. PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: ACTIVITIES REPORT

FOR MINISTER BELL AND GENERAL DOLVIN.

I.

THIS IS MESSAGE NO. 3 FROM THE DEPARTMENT APPLICABLE TO THE
FEBRUARY 1976 NEGOTIATING ROUND IN PANAMA, DESPATCHED FROM
ARA/PAN AT 5:30 PM FEBRUARY 11.

II. BRIEFING ITEMS

A. REAGAN'S REMARKS ON PANAMA -- FOLLOWING IS VERSION OF
GOVERNOR REAGAN'S PUBLIC REMARKS ABOUT PANAMA CANAL WHICH
IS REPORTEDLY BEING USED, WITH VERY SLIGHT VARIATIONS, IN
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CAMPAIGN SPEECHES THAT ADDRESS FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.

THIS PARTICULAR TEXT WAS USED IN A RECENT SPEECH DELIVERED AT EXETER, NH. QUOTE. FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS WE HAVE USED THE PANAMA CANAL WITH FAIRNESS TO ALL WHO HAVE USED IT PEACEFULLY. WE HAVE DONE SO AT NO PROFIT TO THE U.S., INVESTING 70 BILLION DOLLARS, MOST OF IT SPENT IN PANAMA, GIVING IT ONE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF LIVING IN LATIN AMERICA. BUT FOR 15 YEARS WE HAVE BEEN PROPAGANDIZED BY

OUR OWN STATE DEPARTMENT THAT OUR PRESENCE IN PANAMA IS A KIND OF COLONIALISM IN THE FORM OF A LONG-TERM LEASE OF PANAMANIAN TERRITORY. IN 1974, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SIGNED A MEMORANDUM WHICH IN FACT CALLED INTO QUESTION OUR TERRITORIAL RIGHT TO THE CANAL ZONE. IT'S TIME THAT WE WERE REMINDED THAT THE 1903 TREATY SIGNED BY THE U.S., BRITAIN AND PANAMA GAVE U.S. EXCLUSIVE SOVEREIGNTY IN PERPETUITY OVER THE CANAL ZONE. NOT ONLY DID WE PAY THE GOP, WE PURCHASED IN FEE SIMPLE ALL THE PRIVATELY OWNED LAND IN THE CANAL ZONE FROM EACH INDIVIDUAL OWNER. ALL BRANCHES OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL RECOGNIZED THE ZONE AS U.S. TERRITORY. IN 1907, THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RULED THAT IT WAS OFFICIAL TERRITORY. A 1972 FEDERAL COURT DECISION REINFORCED THIS RULING. IF THE ZONE ISN'T PART OF THE U.S., NEITHER IS ALASKA OR ALL THE LAND ACQUIRED IN THE LOUISIANA AND GADSON PURCHASES.

WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE DOING? NEGOTIATING A GIVE AWAY OF THE CANAL TO A MARXIST MILITARY DICTATOR WHO SEIZED POWER 8 YEARS AGO BY A COUP OUSTING THE DULY ELECTED GOVERNMENT? THERE HAVE BEEN NO ELECTIONS SINCE. THERE ARE NO CIVIL LIBERTIES FOR THE PEOPLE. THE PRESS IS CENSORED. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN DISBANDED.

THE CANAL IS ESSENTIAL TO WESTERN HEMISPHERE DEFENSE AND THE WORLD IS SAFER WITH THE UNITED STATES RUNNING THE CANAL THAN IT WOULD BE IF WE TURN IT OVER TO GENERAL TORRIJOS. END QUOTE.

B. UNILATERAL ACTIONS/PANAMANIAN USE OF FT. SAN LORANZO-- COL. CRITTENDON INFORMED US THAT CONGRESSWOMAN SULLIVAN'S CONFIDENTIAL

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LETTER TO MR. VEYSEY HAD BEEN RECEIVED TODAY AND THAT IT OBJECTS TO THIS ACTION. MR. VEYSEY IS OUT OF TOWN, BUT WILL RETURN TOMORROW AND HAVE OPPORTUNITY REVIEW LETTER.

C. JACK ANDERSON ARTICLE -- AS WE INFORMED EMBASSY THIS MORNING, THE JACK ANDERSON COLUMN OF FEBRUARY 11 INCLUDED AN ITEM ALLEGING THAT THERE IS AN OUTSTANDING SEALED INDICTMENT AGAINST MOISES TORRIJOS ON DRUG TRAFFICKING

CHARGES. THE ARTICLE MAINTAINS THAT REPRESENTATIVE LESTER WOLFF IS INVESTIGATING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT ATTEMPTED IN 1972 TO HUSH UP THE CHARGES TO PROTECT THE PANAMA CANAL TALKS. THE ITEM ALSO MAINTAINS THAT THE DEPARTMENT FORCED A DEA AGENT TO SIGN A LETTER RETRACTING A STATEMENT TO REPRESENTATIVE MURPHY THAT MOISES TORRIJOS WAS A TRAFFICKER. AS YOU WILL READILY RECOGNIZE, THIS IS A REHASH OF EARLIER ANDERSON COLUMNS. WE HAVE

PREPARED CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE FOR THE SPOKESMAN DENYING ANY STATE DEPARTMENT EFFORT TO DOWNPLAY ANY ALLEGED CHARGES AGAINST THE GENERAL'S BROTHER. USIS WIRELESS FILE INCLUDES THE TEXT OF THE ANDERSON STORY.

D. SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE -- ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT HAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SECRETARY IS PLANNING TO HOLD ONE PRIOR TO HIS FEBRUARY 16 DEPARTURE ON HIS LATIN AMERICAN TRIP. WE WILL REPORT TEXT OF ANY REMARKS ON PANAMA BY PHONE TO EMBASSY.

III. ACTION ITEMS

NONE. KISSINGER

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